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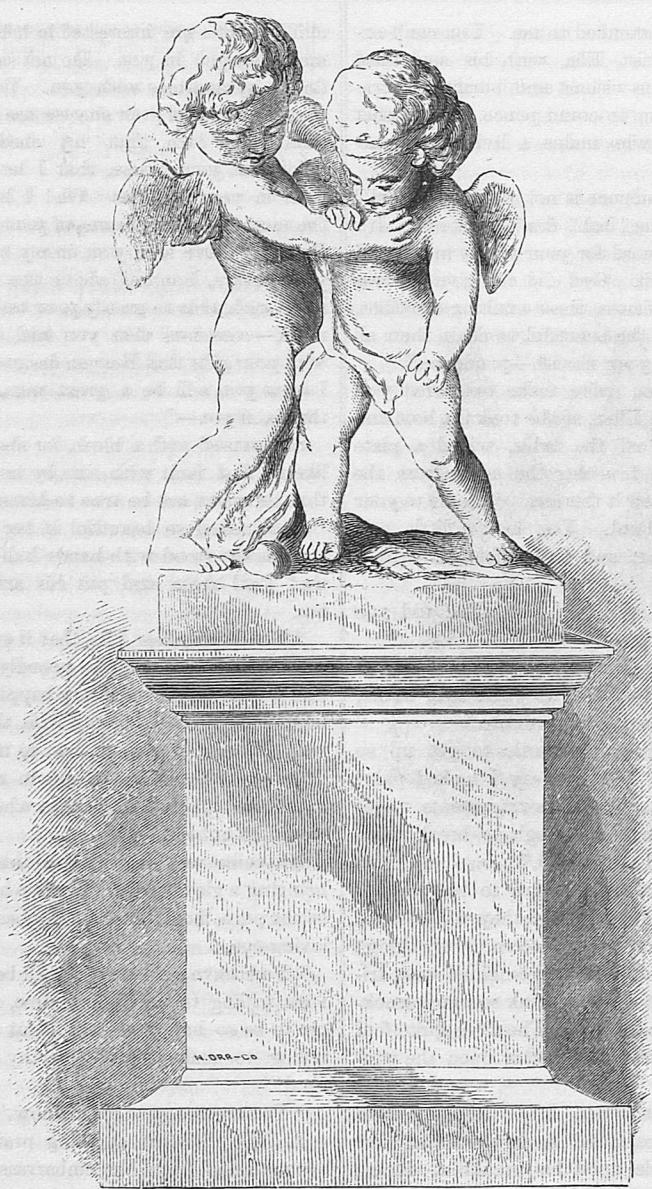
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THE STRUGGLE FOR THE HEART.

A splendid group in statuary-marble, representing two Cupids struggling for the heart which lays at their feet. This exquisite work was executed by BORANI, of Carrara, Italy, expressly for the Cosmopolitan Art Association, and forms one of the works for distribution in January.

## LIFE'S ILLUSIONS.

## CHAPTER I.



YOUNG artist sat upon the edge of the bed in his atelier. It was ten o'clock of a cheerful winter morning, yet he had only arisen about half-an-hour before. A small fire was struggling in the tiny grate; and a potato, balanced upon the poker before it, was roasting slowly and dimly,

looking forlorn enough, surrounded as it was by the accumulated ashes of several days, ends of cigars, and fragments of paper, &c.

He sat regarding his one potato with an air of the deepest dejection; and, in truth, his breakfast, and his room, and himself looked very uncomfortable. There was nothing to satisfy an artist's love of beauty in the incongruous furnishing of that little apartment, serving, as it did, for studio, bedroom, and eating-room. A coffee-pot (empty also), and a tin-cup, with two or

three unwashed plates, a box of salt, and a knife and fork, stood upon a deal table, which also had a copy of Ruskin's works, a smoking-cap, a pallet with the paints dried on, a cup holding brushes, an ink-stand, and a half-worn boot. The mate of the boot lay upon the floor at the other end of the room. There was no carpet on the floor, which was so well littered with torn papers, pieces of cloth stained with turpentine and colors, and the miscellaneous articles of the artist's studio and wardrobe, that it scarcely needed one. The only beautiful thing in the room, saving the young man himself, was a picture upon the easel—a landscape of charming loveliness, which led the eye and the thought at once away from the dreary room and the cold winter, to the warmth and splendor of an autumn scene, where forest-covered hills looked down into a deep and quiet lake.

But the youth was not regarding the picture; he was hungry, and was wishing that the potato would some time be cooked.

He was a handsome and athletic specimen of youthful manhood. Nature, in conferring upon him a fine genius, had given him also a vigorous constitution, so that strength of body need not be lacking to support and sustain a powerful mind. Rich masses of hair swept back from his wide forehead, and clustered, artist-fashion, about his throat. His eyes were gray, full of fire, with long lashes; his mouth and chin were rounded into Apollo-like beauty, while the peachy flush of the morning of life still glowed upon his cheek. His shoulders and chest were broad and full, and his form had the grace and ease of perfect health, seeming almost to breathe out superfluous energies, except that now his attitude was more listless than became the hour.

"The goods of this world are most villainously divided," he muttered, kicking over a chair with a swing of his foot. "Here am I, who in less than ten years will be famous throughout the world, obliged to stay the cravings of hunger upon a half-raw potato,—the only breakfast, by heavens, that humanity deems the man of genius worthy of."

Just then there was a low rap at the door. "Come in," was shouted in rather a sullen voice; whereupon the door un-closed, and, with a blush and smile, the landlady's daughter made her appearance, with a cup of coffee in her hand.

"I have brought you a cup of coffee and a roll," she said, placing them on the table. "Are you not well this morning, Paul, that you arise so late?"

Paul was not a table-boarder. He had this little room in the upper story of the house, and cooked for himself, because he had not the means to pay for regular board; but this was not the first time, when his supplies were low, that little Ellen had come to his relief. She seemed to have an instinct for finding out when he was in his worst predicaments.

"Oh, I am perfectly well, Ella," he returned, "but I was out late last night, and felt indolent. Besides, what is there to induce exertion for a poor devil like me? Better sleep, and forget that I am. I'm much obliged to you for the coffee, though, Ellen; I was just thinking that my one potato would make but a sorry breakfast for so stout a man as I am."

The young girl looked sorrowfully at the potato. He called her "little Ellen," although she was sixteen. She had such an airy, childish figure, and such an innocent, lovely face.

"Why, Paul, is that all you have?"

"Yes, and not a cent to buy my dinner with."

"I thought you got thirty dollars for the portrait you finished day before yesterday."

"I did, and ought to have had a hundred for it;—it was a capital thing. But you cannot expect snobs to know the worth of a picture. I got my thirty dollars, but I owed ten to your mother for room-rent; and, the truth is, I have been invited out so often by my brother artists, that I felt as if I must return some of their favors. So we just had a quiet supper at Black's last night. I thought I should have enough left to keep me until this landscape was off my easel, but we drank more champagne than I thought. I had fifty cents after the bill was settled, and stopped into a shop I found open to get some rice and crackers to last the week out; but, by George, they had some such glorious Havanas, I could not resist buying a bundle. I smoked four last night after I got home."

The pretty face before him grew very grave.

"Do you think it right to be so reckless about your money, Paul?"

"You never met an artist yet who had any thing stingy about him. I know I am in honor bound to return some of the

courtesies extended to me. You can't expect an artist, Ella, with his soul filled with glorious visions and burning aspirations, to stop to count pence. Leave that to the fool who makes a living by cheating."

"But prudence is not meanness, Paul."

"Prudence! bah! don't speak of it. It's too bad a word for your pretty mouth,—I am sick of it. God did not give us these wild enthusiasms, these exulting emotions, this love of the beautiful, to chain them all down with your slavish—prudence."

"I do not quite make out what you mean," said Ellen, as she took the boot and the paints off the table, wiped a plate neatly, and brushing the ashes from the potato, placed it thereon. "Come to your breakfast, Paul. You look a little pale this morning, and the coffee will refresh you."

"This is delicious, dear Ella: did you make it yourself?"

"Yes, I just made it, to have it fresh for you. I have been up these four hours, Paul, and busy every minute."

"It's quite unromantic to get up so early, Ella. Did you say I looked pale? no wonder! The discouragements under which I labor, are enough to break down even as well a man as I."

"They are indeed hard to bear, Paul; but work earnestly, and they will soon be over. Energy will overcome every thing; and energy and genius combined *must* triumph. But do you think so much smoking agrees with you! The air is quite foul with it, yet—I had better open the window."

"What a quiet, little, common-place thing you are, Ella!" spoke the artist, after eating awhile upon his breakfast, during which the girl had been flitting about, picking up things, and putting the room a little in order. "Always got some wise saw on your innocent lips. Yet, it's very little you can appreciate the peculiar trials of one of our class."

"Do you think I do not appreciate you, Paul?" asked she in a trembling voice, the tears springing to her eyes.

"Why, darling, what do *you* know about Art? and art and the artist are the same thing. We are not to be judged by common rules."

"I thought the human heart was much the same in all, Paul, and that each one of us was subject to the same great principles of duty and right. It is true that I know nothing of Art; I am an untutored

child. But I am interested in it because I am interested in you. Do not say that I do not sympathize with you. You know that my hopes of your success are brighter than your own, that my cheek burns quicker at your praise, that I have every faith in your abilities. Oh! I have had the most beautiful dreams of your success, Paul! I have seen you, in my visions of your future, honored above the most of men—rich, able to gratify your tastes; and more,—conscious that you had done all with your gifts that Heaven designed. Oh, I *know* you will be a great man, Paul—that is, if you—"

She paused with a blush, for she did not like to find fault with him by insinuating that he might not be true to himself.

She looked so beautiful in her enthusiasm, as she stood with hands half-clasped, that Paul arose and put his arm about her.

"You know, dear Ella, that if ever I am the successful man you so proudly predict, that you are to share all my happiness and honor. You are to be my wife, then; for who else can ever be so dear to me as the little girl who clings to me in my dark hours, and makes life pleasant when else it would be unbearable?"

His voice was as tender as his words, bringing a glow of the sweetest happiness to the pure face that blushed beneath his loving eye.

"You have said that it shall be so, and I am willing to wait a long time, since we are to be so happy at last. But oh, I am trying to make myself worthy of you, Paul!"

"You are too good for me now," he said.

A little diffident at being praised, she caught relief from her embarrassment by glancing about the room. A ray of mirth shot from her soft eyes as she raised them to her lover's face again.

"Still," she said, in a tone of much gravity, "with all my endeavors to raise myself up to an appreciation of you, I never could understand the congeniality of genius and dirt."

Paul colored as he glanced over the accumulated untidiness of his apartment.

"You are such a neat little body," he said, "you are too fastidious. I can't bring myself down from the clouds to contemplate this floor. To sweep and dust, is not my destiny."

"How very grandiloquent you are!" and her silvery laugh rewarded the tragic attitude into which he had thrown him-

self. "But I must go now, for it *is* my destiny to sweep and dust, and I must be about it;" and blithe as sunshine, she glided from the room.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEN Ellen said to her lover that she was trying "to make herself worthy of him," he paid slight attention to the words, and never dreamed of half the meaning they contained.

They meant that she was spending every moment of her spare time—and little that was, with all her various duties—in the cultivation of her mind and tastes, under difficulties which would have discouraged any one but a loving woman. Aware of the deficiencies of her education, and not wishing to disgrace the place which she might some time hold as the wife of a great artist, she expended every bit of her trifling allowance of spending-money, in the purchase of school-books, over which she pored during the long winter evenings,—her knitting, and even her sewing, in her hands at the same time. She stood so much in awe of the splendid superiority of her lover, that she never confided this to him, but worked away patiently, content that he should know when time developed the truth to him.

Ellen was a delicate little thing, without overmuch physical strength; yet she was virtual mistress of the boarding-house which her mother kept. Her parent's health was so wrecked that she was unable longer to attend to its duties, and she was only too glad to repose the burden upon the slender shoulders of her child. The whole oversight of the servants came upon her; and as the establishment could not support much help, she had also considerable manual labor to perform: the arrangement of the parlor and several other rooms, and the preparation of all the pastry, was part of her daily task. In addition, there was necessity for constant economy, the care of every thing, and the keeping of accounts. So that, light and swift as her footsteps were, she was sometimes hurried to get through the round; and night seldom came without finding her so weary that sleep would have been sweeter than study, if love and a keen desire for knowledge had not been the stimulants which kept her bright eyes wakeful.

How she continued to do so much, no one but herself ever knew; but she managed to save out three hours from every

afternoon for music. In the parlor was a piano, whose once sweet voice was somewhat cracked with age. This had been bequeathed to her by a maiden aunt, and was her most precious possession; for she had a passionate love of music, and an intuitive perception of its mysteries of harmony. She had a pleasing voice, too, round and sweet in its notes, and yielding so easily to tutorage that her master was delighted with her success. She had to pay pretty high for her lessons; and her mother, who had not much music in her soul, was disposed to think it extravagant; but Ellen was willing to go very plainly dressed, and to work very hard, in order that her mother might think she had earned the necessary means.

Thus, when the young girl left her lover and hastened down stairs, it was to go to the store-room to prepare the pastry for dinner, which she did with an inward resolve that if she was obliged to forego that meal herself, in order to effect her purpose, Paul should have a share of every good thing she made. So, while she worked and caroled a little love-song to herself, he mused upon the miserable way in which the world was put together—with fools on top and men of genius at the bottom—smoked the rest of his Havanas, one after the other, made up a charming conceit from the puffs of smoke as they curled dreamily before his eyes, thought he would try to sketch it upon paper, concluded that he was too lazy; and, about the time that Ellen had off her work-apron, and was smoothing her hair to bring his dinner up to him, he got his dirty pallet in order, and set about retouching his picture.

Just then came a knock at his door. The gentleman whose portrait had been finished the day before yesterday, appeared with a friend, who wished to know when the artist could arrange a sitting for him. This was a flattering comment upon the success of his former effort, as well as a promise of a speedy release from his difficulties, and Paul very willingly appointed a sitting for the next morning.

The gentlemen sat some time and conversed agreeably upon subjects not particularly connected with Art. They had scarcely gone when Ellen came in with a covered plate.

"I have been waiting this half-hour for your visitors to retire," she said, "and am afraid your dinner has cooled. Have you got another sitter, Paul?—have you?" she said earnestly.

"Yes, little one! another egotist wants his ugliness perpetuated."

"Oh, that is such good news! I am so glad for you!" she said, kissing him from very joy. "Don't call him an egotist. Perhaps some wife who loves him, or some child, has begged him for his likeness. It's very kind of him to get it for them; and besides, it's so fortunate for you!"

"Very fortunate, to be wasting my time upon portraits, when my mission is High Art! However, I'll not grumble at that, for a year or two yet, Ella. And, as you say, it buys bread and butter; and the body must be fed if the soul does famish. Whew! what a nice dinner! and what a good little girl you are!"

"Attend to the body, you know—the mind is beyond my appreciation," she returned, with the least bit of malice, as she left him to enjoy what she had brought.

That afternoon Paul's dormant energies revived, and he painted enthusiastically upon his picture. The last tints of twilight found him lingering lovingly over it; and when his faithful Ellen came up with a cup of tea, she found him in one of his most exulting, hopeful, and triumphant moods.

His cheeks burned, and his eyes gleamed with deep light, so that she whispered to herself, "Oh, how beautiful he is!"

"Come, Ellen, come," he cried, "and look upon my picture. It is the best thing I have ever done! It is perfect in its way! Oh! I wish you were an artist, that you might realize its beauty, and the difficulties that I have overcome. Difficulties! I felt no difficulties this afternoon! My hand worked of itself, doing unconsciously the bidding of my soul, which was on fire with eagerness. There! that water—can you measure its depth?—catching the hue of the hills in its upper part, but sinking far below all shadows in its lucid and quiet coolness. Do you not see how I have caught the very tint of our autumn sky?—a hazy purple, softer than downs, hovering over the horizon—and that break between the hills, leading the thought away to infinite distances! Say, Ella! what do you think of it?"

"Oh, I say it is beautiful, Paul—beautiful in its solitude, its brilliancy, and yet its perfect quietude. That one bright speck of a cloud, as if some soaring angel, in leaving the place, had dropped a plume midway, is very effective. How much lovelier it is than the black city about us! Oh, Paul, I would be now there, wandering hand in hand by the shore of the lake,

or sitting beneath the trees, while they showered their gorgeous leaves upon us. It is a sweet place for lovers—and I do pine so for nature, in this wilderness of men!"

"I wish we were there, indeed, my Ella," responded Paul; and with arms intertwined, they stood before the picture, lost in happy reveries, walking in spirit amid its beauties, until it no longer gleamed upon them through the deepening night.

Paul's judgment of his picture was confirmed in a moderate manner by the gentleman who sat to him next morning, and who proved to be a person of refined tastes, and quite an amateur in painting.

"It is a jewel in its way," he said; "I wish I might become its possessor; but, I really am not able to give for it what you ought to have. I am working for a salary, and must limit myself to it. However, if I can be of any service to you in disposing of it, I shall be glad to make its merits known."

"I am but a young and struggling artist," was the reply, "and the praises of patrons are of value to me."

In consequence of the interest his sitter felt, he asked permission to display the picture in the elegant store of his employer, promising to say good words for it; and this being done, its peculiar beauty attracted a purchaser, despite the humble name of the painter, "Paul Graham," in the corner.

"I have the pleasure of bringing you forty dollars for your picture, which was taken by a person of reputation as a critic," said the gentleman, wher. he came also to pay for his portrait. "It is not, of course, what you would have had for it if your fame had been established; but even at such prices, you can keep out of want until your genius brings the reputation which will secure more liberal rewards. Paint another as good, and I am quite sure I can dispose of it for you. Whenever you have any thing for sale, bring it to me, and I will exhibit it to good advantage."

Paul thanked his new friend, inwardly resolving to be very industrious, and do something still more praiseworthy immediately. Nevertheless, the seventy dollars he had earned, slipped through his fingers like quicksilver, and he was again penniless, with only two or three unfinished sketches, of no particular merit, upon his easel.

As she sat patiently at her studies in the room below, Ellen often heard the boister-

ous mirth of Paul and his brother artists; keeping late hours over their cigars and beer, when none of them were flush enough with means to pay for wine—telling good stories, singing good songs, recounting their ills, wrongs, and hardships—grumbling at everybody on earth saving themselves, and enjoying their fellowship amazingly. Often she leaned her head in her hand with a pensive sigh; for she knew that such nights brought slumberous mornings and listless days. Much as she loved him, she could see he was frittering away his fine talents in idle dreams, and undermining his splendid constitution by irregular hours of eating, sleeping, and taking exercise. When she ventured to remonstrate in her gentle way, Paul always went off into heroics.

"What incentives have I to exertion? What does the world care about me or my pictures? What do these clod-hoppers know about Art? In their eyes, it is a mortal sin for a man to devote himself to any thing but the accumulation of money. I tell you, a man had better not be born at all, than to be born an artist!"

Then the patient heart of the young girl would swell with grief. He did not think enough of their love, and the hope of being able to marry, to make that an incentive to exertion. He talked about love of Art, and yet after all it was only self-love—for if his devotion to the beautiful and to painting had been as sincere as he boasted, would he not have found in that very devotion a charm which would have compensated for all kinds of sorrows? Thus she thought. Her own conscience whispered that waste of the golden hours of youth, neglected opportunities, fruitless repinings, and ingratitude for gifts conferred, were all wrong. She longed to convince her lover of this, and to incite him to a pure ambition, apart from egotism and rivalry.

But Paul justified himself in all his faults, and kept on growing more bitter against the world and less worthy of its praise, day by day.

So it happened that when spring came, he was without money, on the brink of starvation, and cursing the world for it, who had nothing in reality to do with it. For he had physical health and mental powers, and who was to blame if he suffered?

Ellen had put by a little sum of money—it was only six dollars—to buy her a neat spring bonnet, that she might go to church.

She had worn the one she had for a year, summer and winter, and it had become so soiled with the city smoke that her sense of neatness, as well as her pride, rebelled against her wearing it any longer.

But when she learned Paul's situation, of course she abandoned the thought of a bonnet for the present, and bringing him the money, urged him so prettily to take it that he accepted—as he had done once or twice before. She said nothing about the sacrifice she had been obliged to make, but wore her old hat, even when she knew—and what young girl but will affirm that it was a severe trial?—that Paul thought she looked badly in it, and wondered why she did not dress in better taste.

About this time, either the urgency of his necessities, or the warmth of the spring sunshine unlocking the fountains of inspiration, Paul began to work with an industry and an enthusiasm combined which promised the happiest results. He painted a pair of pictures, mates, that were exquisitely conceived and finished, taking them to the shop of his former patron for display.

Their originality and decided merit attracted much attention, and, at length, purchasers and further orders; so that Paul, in the flush of prosperity, concluded that he must have a studio further up-town, and taking the tide of his affairs at the flood, let them lead on to fortune.

It was hard for Ellen to let him go, yet she was too unselfish not to rejoice in his success, and approve the step he decided upon. He promised to come and see her very, very often. For a few weeks he kept his promise; but as he formed new acquaintances and met with increased patronage, his visits grew more "few and far between."

"I am so busy, Ella," was ever his plea; and she trusted him, and believed him, as woman will, bearing her loneliness uncomplainingly.

#### CHAPTER III.

Paul had always been quite successful with portraits, although it was a branch of his art which he did not so well like. During the summer he had many to paint, and at an increased price; and if he had possessed the prudence which artists commonly scorn, as being far beneath their dignity to practice, he might have laid up a nice little sum, sufficient, with his present good prospects, to have warranted him in marrying Ellen. But if he earned money

readily, he spent it still more readily. He might have had a hundred dollars in his purse upon one day, but not a dime the next. Generous and ardent, he could not stop to count his pence. If a brother artist needed, he shared with him; if there was a supper to be paid for, he insisted upon paying for it. He bought himself some elegant clothes, while little Ellen still wore her old-fashioned bonnet. In fact, he was fast growing too fine for Ellen, and she had a keen perception of it. His manner was so restless and changed when he did come to see her, that she was almost as much pained by his visits as by his long absences.

Along in the latter part of the season, he was inexpressibly flattered by having one of the belles of the city sit to him for her portrait. Miss Mordaunt had grown tired of the seashore, having taken one of her inexplicable fancies, and hurried home almost before any one else. Finding it dull enough after the deed was done, she cast about for something to amuse herself with, and so chanced to take a great interest in the handsome young painter. Sitting for her portrait would serve to while away the days until her circle once more gathered about her, and so she decided to confer upon Paul Graham the honor of painting her most beautiful face—an honor, he was aware, which would make his portraits fashionable in a certain little world of which she was centre, and would be likely to result in a shower of commissions. Thus he had two or three reasons for being pleased, not the least of which was that he had a very lovely sitter, and that he was at liberty to choose for her any character in which he might think most fit to depict her.

Miss Mordaunt was twenty-seven years of age, and had all the experience of ten years of constant practice in subduing, tormenting, bewildering, and sometimes breaking the hearts of men. Her charms had not begun to fade in the least—they were rather in their fullest development. She had had poets, politicians, and professional men of distinguished rank at her feet, but she had never chanced to have an artist confessedly in her train. She was amused by the youth, susceptibility, and enthusiasm of Paul, and not loth to try the full power of her beauty upon him. She flattered him most exquisitely; for she permitted him to walk by her side upon the street, she invited him to her house, and introduced him to her friends,

raising him to a social distinction which could not but be pleasing to a poor artist, who felt himself worthy of the best society.

In the mean time the portrait progressed but slowly. Miss Mordaunt talked so enchantingly that she and her painter lost themselves in agreeable conversation, while the brush remained motionless in his hand; but as she did not seem chary of her time, he could not regret it. He dreaded to see his work come to an end—to have to relinquish not only the society of that dazzling woman, but her painted semblance, over which he pondered in a sort of infatuation during her absence.

She reminded him, in the rich and yet northern style of her beauty, of a picture he had once seen of a Russian princess which had pleased him much, and he decided to paint her in a somewhat similar costume. She sat turned a little from him, with her head thrown slightly over her shoulder, looking at him in the most coquettish manner. A long hood of crimson silk edged with ermine, untied and falling back, cast a warm shadow over a part of one cheek, and detained a portion of the golden-brown hair, the rest of which escaped in rich masses down her shoulders. Her eyes were a dark and lustrous blue, looking with a still smile straight into the artist's heart as he painted them; the forehead smooth and rather low, the nose perfect, the mouth sweet as a dream of love, the chin deliciously rounded, and the peerless head set with a dimpled line of beauty upon the loveliest of throats. A dark velvet mantle, which Miss Mordaunt herself adjusted with the consummate skill which made her toilets always perfect, drooped from her shoulders, revealing one beautiful arm and hand.

"Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and great is the power of a beautiful woman, even though she be a fool. Miss Mordaunt was not a fool, was not even very silly—which is more than can be said of most fashionable women. But she was no more the equal of little Ellen in spiritual gifts, in insight of the wants and capacities of a mind like Paul's, in true appreciation of beauty, or even of Art, than Ellen was her equal in magnificence of manner and dress. Nevertheless Paul was infatuated with her sparkling conversation, which was all in looks and smiles, and nothing in matter; and when she made an attempt to appear interested in his tastes and pursuits, he did not detect the hollowness of the profession, but was ready to go down on

his knees in a rapture of gratitude and wonder. Foolish Paul! he was not yet ready to climb fame's height, since this little sudden elevation made him so dizzy.

One afternoon—the very afternoon that the portrait was at last completed, and just as, in a perfect passion of love and regret, he was adding a look of unutterable tenderness to the still smile in the eyes of the painting, and which beamed but too plainly from the living eyes before him—there came to him a little note. He tore it open impatiently, and read:

"Paul—dear Paul! will you not come to me immediately?"

It was the first word he had heard from Ellen in several weeks, and his conscience smote him severely. He had about made up his mind, though, to act the villain towards her, and this last struggle was not so severe as previous ones had been.

"What can she want, I wonder? Perhaps she has heard of my devotion to Miss Mordaunt, and wishes to reproach me. At all events, I *cannot* go to-night—for has not Miss Mordaunt invited me to call upon her this evening, and given me to understand that there will be no other company? No, I cannot go; and at all events I should think Ellen would have more pride!"

These were the thoughts passing through Paul's mind. "A lady's handwriting!—and a pretty one's, too, I should think, from the delicacy of the chirography," said Miss Mordaunt—and then she sighed.

Paul heard the sigh, and it set his heart on fire. Hastily crumpling the note in his hand, lest she should see the words it contained, he threw it carelessly to one side.

"I don't know, indeed," he said, "any thing about it. I am only conscious of the existence of one woman in the world, at this moment."

His companion saw fit not to reprove this outburst—indeed, she did not seem to take it to herself at all; but shortly after, when he announced that her portrait was complete, she gave him a glorious smile, looked at it, declared he had flattered her very much, that he was a genius, a decided genius, and that he must not forget his engagement with her for that evening.

#### CHAPTER IV.

LATE in the day, about two weeks after this, Paul Graham might have been seen hurrying along through street after street, apparently unconscious of his course, and

reckless of personages on the pavements, or dangers at the crossings. His air was haughty and fierce, making people to step aside unconsciously as he approached. With his hair so long about his neck, his broad collar, and flashing eyes, he was taken by some for a mad poet, or a madder spiritualist, an artist bent on suicide, or a discarded lover of the Byron sort.

A discarded lover he was. After waiting a fortnight in the utmost impatience for the chance, he had made an egregious simpleton of himself, by proposing to Miss Mordaunt. Of course she rejected him. He had thought that his God-given genius had constituted him her equal; and she had flattered his vanity until the offer of his heart and hand were made with scarcely more passion than pride and assurance. He was so like an Apollo in his youthful pride and beauty, that Miss Mordaunt almost hesitated, her heart throbbing a beat faster, before she concluded to resign him; but she was as ambitious as she was devoid of conscience; and so, very gently, and in a very lady-like manner, as was her custom, she rejected him. Despite of the sweet morsels in which she rolled up this bitter pill, Paul did not swallow it calmly, as many of her suitors had done. He saw, in a moment, that he had been duped; anger struggled with his love. At the moment he regarded her as immeasurably his inferior, in having been guilty of so much duplicity, and being so vain and cold of heart, and he poured forth such a tirade of scorn and contempt, that the beauty was fairly subdued.

All at once the remembrance of his unfaithfulness to Ellen rushed over him, taking the wind out of the sails of his contempt, tying his tongue, and staggering him with a sense of his own unworthiness. Turning away, he hurried into the street, feeling ten times more miserable at the thought that his own weakness had produced his misfortune, than from any other cause. Unheeding of friends or strangers, he almost ran along, hoping to rid himself of the power of wounded pride and mad passion which possessed him.

He passed the length of many thoroughfares before the weariness of his physical powers began to act upon his mental excitement, so that he thought of any thing about him.

Something very familiar in the locality of the street he was threading, caused him to look aside, as his step flagged, and he recognized his old home. An impulse, not

having its birth in any good reason, made him ascend the steps and ring the bell. A strange servant opened the door. He inquired for Ellen—Miss Ellen Byrd, he repeated, correcting himself.

"Lawk! she don't live here no more."

"What did you say?" asked Paul, startled into a little comprehension of what he was about.

"She's been gone away these ten days. Her mother died about two weeks ago, and she's sold out the furniture to master, and has gone away to some relations, I guess, in the country."

"About two weeks!" It was two weeks ago that Paul had received that brief summons to her side, which he had so utterly neglected. Ellen in distress, orphaned, without a friend that he knew of to appeal to, and he had never been near her in her sorrow! The pangs of remorse were sharp and hard to bear.

"Do you not know *just where* she has gone?"

"Don't know, sir, any thing more about it."

"Is your master in?"

"No, but missus is. Walk in. I don't believe she knows, neither, much about it."

It turned out as the servant predicted. Ellen was gone—they knew not whither. Their concern with her had been solely in business matters. She had seemed very much afflicted; and they believe she had gone to an aunt's, in the country.

So he passed again into the street, in a mood of mind about as wretched as could be. What to do to get rid of his own company, he did not know, but kept walking on and on, in a vain attempt to forget himself.

"Why, here's the very man we want!" exclaimed some one, clapping him on the shoulder.

He paused, and found himself in a group of two or three of his brother artists.

"Come along, Graham; we're going to Salisbury's. He's sold his big picture, and got the money for it. We're all invited to his studio to-night to congratulate him."

"With all my heart! I'm just in the mood for a grand frolic. What can a poor artist do with his spare hours better than just to go to the devil as fast as the world is anxious to send him? A jolly set we are! Look here now, Pinckney, that's the only coat you own, isn't it?"

"Well it is!" responded the one addressed, laughing heartily. "But it is not half so bad as Clark's: he dare not come

out of his room until it gets a little darker. We are going after him now."

"Clark's half mad," spoke another. "He could get a tolerable support drawing for wood-engravers, if he'd work at that about half the time, and paint the rest. But he keeps at his grand historical pictures, which nobody will buy, and starves in his garret."

"And he's right," exclaimed Pinckney, with a small oath. "A genius like his debasing itself to buy bread! He's a martyr in a glorious cause."

"We are all martyrs in our devotion to our beautiful mistress, ART. We give up the hope of worldly honors and emoluments; we give up position and a rank among the snobs of the land," said Paul, with a sudden fierce energy. "Hurrah, boys! hurrah for the artists! At least, we despise the world ten times more than it does us. We know, at least, that we are capital fellows! So hurrah for ourselves!"

"Look here, Graham! we'll have the police after us; and we don't care about a lock-up in lieu of our entertainment at our friend Salisbury's."

The company went on, laughing, talking, and occasionally shouting—the shouts bursting forth from Paul, who was in a state of the deepest excitement. As might be anticipated, he carried his excesses farther that night than he had ever done before, so that when the hour of separation came, he was led to his room by his friends, being too much under the influence of champagne to attempt a solitary walk.

The next morning he arose with a heavy head and a heavier heart. He felt ill and discouraged; and, as usual, and with a degree of self-love astonishing to contemplate, he threw all the blame of his situation upon an innocent and unoffending world. If one could have heard the tirade which he poured forth against society, to a bevy of sympathizing brothers, that morning, while his headache was still upon him, he would give him credit for eloquence, if not for consistency.

After a day or two of yielding to his irritable mood, Paul began to recover himself. He was too fiery and proud of soul to be humiliated by the slights of others, and Miss Mordaunt's rejection of him was fuel to the flame of his ambition. He was determined, by immortalizing himself, to make her feel what she had lost in refusing his love. He was no longer in love with her, for his feeling from the first had been

but a wild and blind passion, inspired by her personal beauty. His desire was for some kind of revenge upon the injury she had given his pride.

Of Ellen he did not like to think, because the thought was full of self-reproach. He remembered her sweetness, her patience, her fine spiritual qualities, only to associate them with the idea that she was too humble for the wife of a great artist—that is, of one who was soon to become a great artist.

As he had supposed, the fact that the fashionable Miss Mordaunt had sat to him, and had lionized him, brought him quite a number of sitters who did not refuse to pay the augmented price which he now set upon his portraits.

In this way, before winter set in, he had earned quite a little sum of money—enough to have set up many an industrious young man in some profitable business. This enabled him to follow the bent of his ambition, dropping portraits, and following the branch of the art which he loved better. His pictures were fine, his friends many, his income good, and his fame upon the increase. All that he wanted was stability of purpose, industry, and a little more liking for the practicalities of life.

He considered it, however, quite beneath his destiny to come down from the airy flights of imagination to the study of worldly theories. He regarded himself as "a glorious fellow," and his friends regarded him in the same light. He thought, upon that account, he was excusable in any excess or extravagance, and his friends thought the same. What would have been shameful, or wild, or shocking in a young man engaged in common business pursuits, and caused him to be dismissed from his employment, was only the eccentricity of genius in him.

When he had money, he lived like a prince; when he had none, he abused the world. He had an utter contempt for all men, however great they might be in their own way, however good, however useful, if they were not either the followers or the patrons of Art. To him the world was but a picture-gallery; so, of course, his view was rather limited of the great purposes which God might have had in view in its construction and its destinies.

As a natural result, his passions outweighed his judgment, and his character became less and less well-balanced. He cultivated peculiarities as a proof of superiority, when, in fact, they were the very

evidences of his weakness. Ah! how much he needed the quiet and sweet influence of a mind like Ellen's, to teach him true wisdom, and direct his wayward genius to serve a high purpose! But all unconscious of the jewel he had cast away, he worked cheerfully on, congratulating himself upon being such a splendid man.

The wonderful industry with which he began the winter, had its origin in a pique against a woman, and died away with that pique. He was idle most of the time, read nothing, was not neat in his personal habits, but indulged himself in luxurious living, tending gradually towards dissipation.

The temple of his fame arose rapidly, but the foundation which should have warranted its permanence, was being as rapidly undermined. He flashed and flared like a brilliant meteor in the eyes of men, and shot into darkness. Irregularity of life brought on ill health, indolence brought poverty; and one cold night, a year from the time when his success was most flattering, after a summer of varied fortunes, he was picked up in the street by the police, and carried to the hospital. A distracted state of mind, caused by want, dissipation, disappointment, and uncertainty, had induced a dangerous fever.

When he came to his senses, after a long illness, he was not in the hospital. An old nurse was in the room, but nearest to his bedside sat Ellen. He regarded her for some moments before she raised her head from her sewing and saw that he was awake. Long sickness had given him that almost preternatural fineness of sense which enables the spirit to comprehend almost without the aid of the body. He knew at once that she had been taking care of him. She was a little more fragile and ethereal of look than when he saw her last. Her face had an expression as if she might have suffered, but there was not a line of grief or discontent upon it; it was all sweetness—heavenly sweetness. More firmness—more character it had, but not less of spiritual loveliness. An odor of flowers floated about the bed; he did not see them, but he associated them at once with the fair girl before him; she had brought them to make the sick-room cheerful. Her delicate fingers flew rapidly as she stitched upon a piece of muslin, as if time was precious. He had gazed upon her in silence for some time when she stole a glance at the patient. A swift light to her eye, and flush to her cheek, bespoke the joy with which she met that

conscious gaze; but she had too much self-control to cry out, as was her impulse.

Quiet was necessary to the welfare of the sick-room, and quiet was in her look, in her gentle attentions, in her voiceless smile, as she came to his bed and prevented him from bursting forth into the rhapsody which his heart prompted.

So Paul Graham lay for many days like one in a pleasant dream, into which, gradually, the whisper of a soft voice was permitted to glide like music into the slumbers of a night. He learned from Ellen the circumstances of his sickness—that she had seen the incident of his being picked up, ill, and carried to the hospital, in the papers the next day; that she had gone and begged to have him removed to this room, which had been prepared for him in the same house in which she boarded; she had hired a nurse and a physician, for her own duties kept her from home a large part of the day.

"Ah, Ellen, how am I ever to pay the expenses you have incurred? Do you not know that I am penniless? Better have left me where I was."

"Because I would not see a friend forsaken by others without stepping forward to his relief. A friend is so much more in sickness than at any other time. I thought that if you died, it would not be entirely among strangers. Do not trouble yourself, Paul, about expenses. I have means to help you, until you are able to help yourself, and then you can, if you are industrious, soon repay me."

"You?" exclaimed Paul.

"Why, yes, I have a little sum laid by which will meet all your wants. The furniture of my dear mother's brought three hundred dollars, which has been lying at interest in the bank these eighteen months. I had intended to purchase a new piano with it, but I can well wait until you repay it."

"But what do you do for a living, Ella?"

"I teach the piano and singing. I have a large class, and am quite successful, I am told. Besides this, I have a small salary for singing in the church."

Paul regarded her with astonishment. That this little frail creature could make exertions thus to support herself comfortably, was new to him; and he had never suspected that her musical education was any thing at all.

"How did you learn music?" he asked.

"By perseverance," she answered with

a smile. "When you were dreaming up in your little room, building air-castles mountain-high, I was working with a will to overcome all difficulties. I loved music, and I resolved that it not only should add to my happiness, but should give me the means of living."

"Well, I confess, I never suspected it," said Paul. "You used to sing sweetly, Ellen; will you not sing for me, now?"

She sang, without hesitation, an old song that he used to love. It stirred up strange memories in his heart of by-gone days, when the lovely girl before him was a confiding little thing, giving him trust and love lavishly out of her guileless soul.

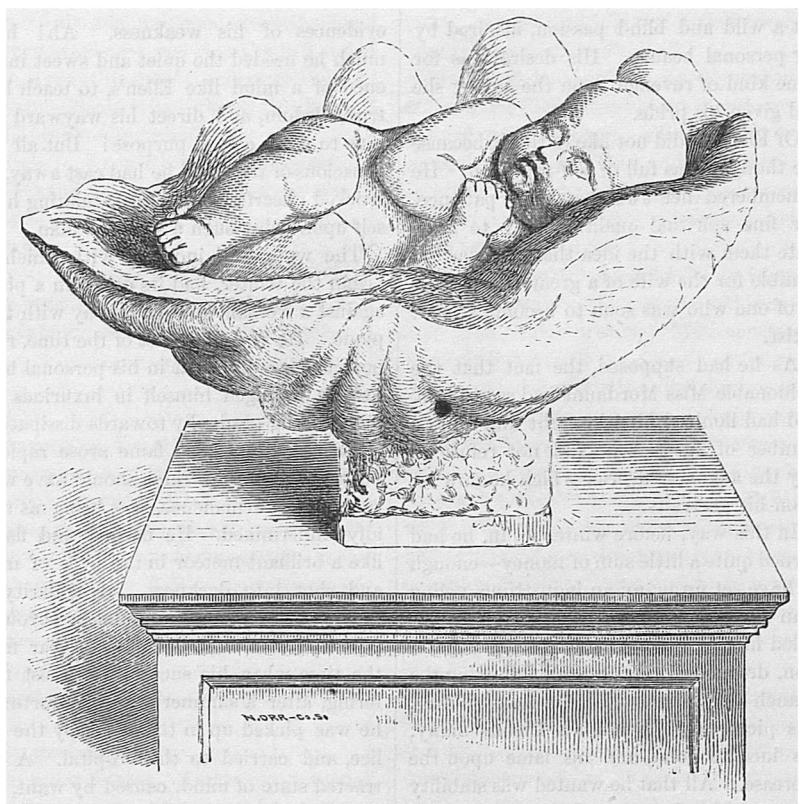
"How basely I have wronged her; how selfish and mean I must appear in her eyes! Yet she is so noble as to pity me, to befriend me! Pity me! would to Heaven she would love me—love me as she used to love!—I should be a better man! But how can she?"

So thought the impetuous artist, as he gazed at her while singing. Ellen had indeed learned to read his true character, and the most impassioned offer of his hand would not at that time have induced her to accept it.

"Do you not find the world a hard place for the poor?" he added, when she had completed her song. "Do you not find it selfish, absorbed in its own interests, bad, hollow, contemptible?"

"I cannot say that I have found its loves always as unselfish as I had dreamed," she answered, looking gravely into his eyes. "But it treats us much as we treat it. I have given it respect, I have labored hard to earn its rewards, and in my humble way I have them. I have even found warm friends—friends who would relieve me somewhat of the burden of doing for myself. But, since I am amply able to take care of myself, and Heaven has given me a talent by which I can do it, why should I not? I find my happiness in cultivating my resources, and making them in return serve me kindly."

Now it was by this, and many other like conversations, that Paul began to realize his immense inferiority to this little girl, whom he had regarded with such neglect. Her self-denial, her high sense of honor and duty, her noble independence, her many arduously-gained acquirements, her earnest, unpretending love of all beautiful and refined things which exerted so spiritual an influence upon her character, her forgiveness, her goodness, all stood out in



CHILD OF THE SEA.

This exquisite piece of sculpture, in statuary marble, represents a beautiful nude little cherub, sleeping in a sea-shell. It was executed expressly for the Association by an Italian artist, after the original by Perelli, and composes one of the works for the distribution in January next.

contrast with his own selfishness. It is true she was not technically acquainted with the art of painting, but he began to realize that this was not the only virtue that a man or woman could possess.

So one day he confessed all his errors, and begged to be restored to her favor. She did not deny that she loved him still, but she refused to enter into any present compact with him.

"You have blamed the world for all your misfortunes," she said to him, gently, "when, in reality, self-love and self-indulgence alone have been at fault. Art does not necessarily bring misery upon her worshippers; they bring it upon themselves. They consider that their genius entitles them to all kinds of immunities, and these immunities destroy them. I love you, Paul, as much as ever; but I desire to wait one year, to see if you have in you the real strength to overcome your own deficiencies."

She was so lovely, so pure, so noble in her own example, that he could not complain. The advantage of having some one

to tell him of his inconsistencies, encourage his efforts, and rebuke his faults, instead of singing in his ears when he did badly that "a glorious fellow like him must do as he pleased," was so great that he speedily learned self-government, and when he had learned that, he had at the same time learned the government of his fortunes.

Paul Graham is now a really admirable man, as well as a promising artist. He is respected for his manhood, as well as for his undoubted genius. Prosperity waits upon his inspired pencil; not driven away by rashness and excess, her stay is friendly and abiding.

He has a beautiful home, and a bright hearthstone, blessed by the laughter of childhood, and surrounded by the sweet influences of that beloved, admired, and accomplished wife to whom he owes all his success, and of whom he is as proud as of his rising fame. The illusions of an undisciplined mind have given way to the calm realities of a happy and useful life; he says that if it is much to be an *Artist*, it is more to be a *MAN*!